



Senate Bill 501

Mr. Chairman and other distinguished members of the committee. I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 501.

The current code requires 1 sign for every 7,500 sf of parking area. The revision before you would apply only to a regional mall complex of not less than 400,000 square feet of gross leasable area and not less than 2 anchor stores and require 1 sign for every entrance to the parking lot.

In prior codes, the 7,500 square foot language was intended for areas where surface parking lots could be accessed, perhaps on foot, from multiple streets abutting the property. The earlier code was amended to apply to other commercial parking lots as a result of towing issues at the time.

At many lots where businesses are not manned 24 hours per day, and where the lots are accessible from multiple areas, this language is meaningful to enable customers to clearly identify parking regulations and to provide knowledge of maximum fees and where vehicles may be picked up if impounded for a violation of these regulations.

Speaking specifically about Arundel Mills, the center has 4 main entrances to the parking lot and 10 additional entrances from parking lots of abutting businesses. With millions of square feet of parking at the center, the current code requires installation of approximately 500 signs throughout the parking lots.

The unintended consequence of the current code requires signs be located throughout the surface lots creating obstacles for vehicles traveling thru the parking lots and encumbering safe snow removal and street sweeping operations. As the code exists today, it is simply not reasonable for regional mall complexes to comply with the code without major interferences or considerable expense.

One final thought to consider, in today's retail environment, the last thing a regional mall wants to do is alienate customers by towing vehicles. Towing companies are not actively patrolling mall parking lots searching for vehicles in violation of the established parking regulations. They are towing only after instructed by property management.

SB501 is intended solely to change the signage requirements for regional malls to and would have no bearing on smaller parking lots of other businesses.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today and I would also like to thank Senator Beidle for sponsoring this legislation.

Respectfully,

Gene Condon
VP/General Manager
Simon, Arundel Mills